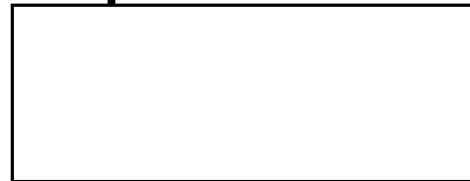


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USSR - Middle East: [The Soviet Union may have decided to give the Arab fedayeen more assistance.]

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[Moscow has provided indirect arms assistance to the fedayeen for some time, and Soviet propaganda support has increased in recent months. Only in recent weeks, however, has there been any sign of a change in Moscow's outlook on the Arab guerrillas.]

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[The Soviets recognize the fedayeen's growing popularity and may feel they can no longer be standoffish toward the guerrillas. By giving the impression of jumping on the fedayeen bandwagon, Moscow would underscore its support for the Arabs and gain a share of the credit for fedayeen successes. The Soviets might also hope to stave off Communist Chinese influence among the fedayeen while gaining a measure of influence over guerrilla activity for themselves.]

[A change in Moscow's attitude toward the fedayeen would probably be only a tactical shift in Soviet policy in the Middle East. The Soviets may give the fedayeen more political and propaganda support as well as greater material assistance, but Moscow is unlikely to endorse all fedayeen goals or drop its efforts to arrange a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.]

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